

UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT
EASTERN DISTRICT OF MICHIGAN
SOUTHERN DIVISION

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA,

Plaintiff,

v

No. 19-cr-20026

PREM KUMAR RAMPEESA,

Defendant.

PLEA

BEFORE THE HONORABLE GERSHWIN A. DRAIN
UNITED STATES DISTRICT JUDGE
Theodore Levin United States Courthouse
231 West Lafayette Boulevard
Detroit, Michigan
Wednesday, May 22, 2019

APPEARANCES:

For the Plaintiff: MR. BRANDON HELMS
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For the Defendant: MS. WANDA CAL
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Reported by: Merilyn J. Jones, RPR, CSR
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None

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None

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EXHIBITS:IdentifiedReceived

None

1 Detroit, Michigan

2 Wednesday, May 22, 2019 - 11:14 a.m.

3 THE CASE MANAGER: All rise. The United States
4 District Court for the Eastern District of Michigan is now in
5 session. The Honorable Gershwin A. Drain presiding.

6 You may be seated.

7 The Court calls the criminal matter United States
8 of America versus Prem Kumar Rampeesa. Case Number
9 19-cr-20026-4.

10 Counsel, please state your appearances for the
11 record.

12 MR. HELMS: Good morning, your Honor. Brandon
13 Helms on behalf of the United States, and with me is Ronald
14 Waterstreet from my office.

15 THE COURT: All right. Good morning.

16 MS. CAL: Good morning, your Honor. Wanda Cal on
17 behalf of Prem Rampeesa.

18 THE COURT: All right. Good morning to you also.

19 All right. As I understand it, Mr. Rampeesa is
20 going to enter a plea of guilty to the conspiracy charge; is
21 that correct?

22 MR. HELMS: Yes, your Honor.

23 MS. CAL: Yes, your Honor.

24 THE COURT: Okay. And there's no Rule 11 Plea
25 Agreement; is that also correct?

1 MS. CAL: That's correct, your Honor.

2 MR. HELMS: Your Honor, one was offered, but it
3 was rejected by the defendant.

4 THE COURT: Okay.

5 All right. So, and there's no language problem;
6 Mr. Rampeesa can speak English pretty well?

7 MS. CAL: Yes. As long as it's spoken slowly.

8 THE COURT: Okay.

9 All right. Then, Ms. Cal, you and your client can
10 come to the podium.

11 All right. And let's unlock the defendant's --
12 oh, they're already unlocked. Okay. It looked like you had
13 them locked.

14 All right. Is it, "Mr. Rampeesa".

15 THE DEFENDANT: "Rampeesa".

16 THE COURT: "Rampeesa"?

17 THE DEFENDANT: Yes, sir.

18 THE COURT: All right. So, is it correct that you
19 want to enter a plea of guilty to the charge that's contained
20 in the indictment?

21 THE DEFENDANT: Yes, sir.

22 THE COURT: All right. I'm going to have my case
23 manager, who is seated in front of me, administer an oath to
24 you.

25 THE CASE MANAGER: Please raise your right hand.

1 Do you solemnly swear or affirm that the testimony you are
2 about to give to the Court in this matter here pending shall be
3 the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth?

4 You have to answer, yes or no.

5 THE DEFENDANT: Yes.

6 THE CASE MANAGER: You have to speak up a little
7 bit, please.

8 MS. CAL: No. No. No. She's only asking you
9 whatever questions they ask you today are you going to answer
10 truthfully today.

11 THE DEFENDANT: Truthfully, yes. Yes. Yes,
12 ma'am.

13 THE CASE MANAGER: Please state your name for the
14 record?

15 THE DEFENDANT: Prem Kumar Rampeesaa.

16 THE CASE MANAGER: Okay. Thank you.

17 THE COURT: Okay. Either counsel want to put
18 anything on the record at this point with regard to this plea?

19 MR. HELMS: No, your Honor. I've already noticed
20 that we -- I noted that we offered a Rule 11 and it was
21 rejected.

22 THE COURT: All right. Ms Cal, anything?

23 MS. CAL: Only thing, your Honor, I'd asked that
24 sometimes my client and I do have a rapport where he does
25 understand me quite well, and I know the U.S. Attorney wanted

1 to ask the questions. He has them written down, but if that
2 doesn't work, if I could ask the questions so that we can make
3 sure we get this done --

4 THE COURT: Okay.

5 MS. CAL: -- I'd ask that.

6 THE COURT: Okay. Okay.

7 All right. Mr. Rampeesa, I'm going to ask you a
8 lot of questions and I'm required to do that, and I know your
9 attorney, Ms. Cal, has gone over all of these things with you,
10 but the law requires that I go over them again with you here in
11 court on the record; do you understand that?

12 THE DEFENDANT: Yes, sir.

13 THE COURT: And there's a lady to my left, would
14 be your right. She's in blue. She's writing down everything
15 that's said. So you have to talk loud enough, not only that I
16 can hear you, but that she can hear you, because she's writing
17 everything down.

18 THE DEFENDANT: Yes, sir.

19 THE COURT: Okay. So speak nice and loud so that
20 we both can hear you.

21 So, do you understand that you're under oath now
22 and that you're sworn to tell the truth?

23 THE DEFENDANT: Yes, sir.

24 THE COURT: And do you understand that if you
25 answer any of my questions falsely or untruthfully, those

1 answers could be later used against you in another prosecution
2 for perjury or false statement, you understand that?

3 THE DEFENDANT: Yes, sir.

4 THE COURT: Okay. And what's your full name?

5 THE DEFENDANT: My name is Prem Kumar Rampeesa.

6 THE COURT: Okay. And you can pull the microphone
7 down close to your mouth and that will help a little bit.

8 And how old are you?

9 THE DEFENDANT: I'm 27 years old.

10 THE COURT: And how far did you go in school?

11 THE DEFENDANT: From 2017. It's Master's Degree.

12 THE COURT: Okay. You have a Master's Degree?

13 THE DEFENDANT: Yes, sir.

14 THE COURT: Did you get the Master's Degree here
15 in the United States or was it in India?

16 THE DEFENDANT: I done my bachelor's in India. I
17 came to United States for Master's in computer science.

18 THE COURT: Okay. So, does that mean that you can
19 read and write and understand English pretty good?

20 THE DEFENDANT: Yes, sir.

21 THE COURT: Okay. And have you recently been
22 treated for any type of mental illness or addiction to alcohol
23 or narcotics?

24 THE DEFENDANT: No, sir.

25 THE COURT: And are you currently now under the

1 influence of any drugs or medication or alcoholic beverage?

2 THE DEFENDANT: No, sir.

3 THE COURT: Okay. All right. And have you had a
4 chance to look at the indictment that's been returned against
5 you; the charges?

6 THE DEFENDANT: Yeah. Yeah, I read the paperwork.

7 THE COURT: Okay. And have you had a chance to
8 talk to Ms. Cal about the charges?

9 THE DEFENDANT: Yeah. I read the paperwork.

10 THE COURT: Okay.

11 THE DEFENDANT: I talked with my attorney.

12 THE COURT: Okay. All right.

13 And has she been able to answer questions you
14 might have about it?

15 THE DEFENDANT: I ask my attorney. She said if I
16 need any help she answer me.

17 THE COURT: Okay. All right. And so are you
18 satisfied with the advice and counsel that she's given you up
19 to this point?

20 THE DEFENDANT: Yes, sir.

21 THE COURT: Okay. And have there been any
22 promises made to you with regard to entering this guilty plea?

23 THE DEFENDANT: No, ma'am. No, sir.

24 THE COURT: Okay. And has anyone threatened you
25 and told you that you must enter this guilty plea?

1 THE DEFENDANT: No.

2 THE COURT: And are you doing it freely and
3 voluntarily?

4 THE DEFENDANT: Yes, sir.

5 THE COURT: Okay. And are you pleading guilty
6 because you are guilty?

7 THE DEFENDANT: Yes, sir.

8 THE COURT: Okay. And are you a citizen of India?

9 THE DEFENDANT: Yes, sir.

10 THE COURT: Okay. And you're not a citizen of the
11 United States?

12 THE DEFENDANT: No, sir.

13 THE COURT: Okay. And do you understand that by
14 entering this guilty plea it will result in you probably being
15 deported or removed from the country of the United States, you
16 understand that?

17 THE DEFENDANT: Yes, sir.

18 THE COURT: Okay. And does that affect your
19 desire to plead guilty?

20 THE DEFENDANT: No.

21 THE COURT: Okay. And do you have any other
22 convictions; do you have any other prior convictions?

23 THE DEFENDANT: No, sir.

24 THE COURT: Okay. And do you understand that when
25 you do get a conviction, that affects your ability to vote

1 sometimes or have a firearm or get certain licenses, and do you
2 understand that there are additional consequences that happen
3 from having a felony conviction, you understand that?

4 THE DEFENDANT: Yes, sir.

5 THE COURT: Okay. I'm wonder if we need an
6 interpreter, because it seems like he seems to be struggling
7 with some of my questions.

8 MS. CAL: Well, the only interpreter that I found
9 for the, that came to the arraignment was not a certified
10 interpreter.

11 THE COURT: Okay.

12 MR. CAL: And he, in my opinion, was not
13 interpreting correctly, because the judge would speak and go on
14 and on and then he would turn and say a few words to my client.
15 He was not doing it verbatim as I had asked him to do verbatim.

16 Unless we can find another interpreter, my client
17 speaks --

18 What's your language?

19 THE DEFENDANT: Telegu.

20 MS. CAL: -- Telegu.

21 THE COURT: And that's one of the languages in
22 India?

23 THE DEFENDANT: Yes, sir.

24 MS. CAL: Yes.

25 THE COURT: Okay.

1 MS. CAL: But it's a very narrow dialect. Not
2 many people speak that.

3 THE COURT: Okay. Yeah, maybe we should have an
4 interpreter because he seems to be struggling with answering my
5 questions, and my case manager can help to arrange, I think,
6 just to kind of be on the safer side.

7 MS. CAL: That's fine, your Honor.

8 THE COURT: So, I think we'll just set a new date
9 for this matter. Okay?

10 All right. We'll be in recess, then, and my case
11 manager will set a new date.

12 THE CASE MANAGER: All rise.

13 Court is in recess.

14 (At 11:25 a.m. proceedings concluded)
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C E R T I F I C A T E

I, Marilyn J. Jones, Official Court Reporter of the United States District Court, Eastern District of Michigan, appointed pursuant to the provisions of Title 28, United States Code, Section 753, do hereby certify that the foregoing pages 1-12, inclusive, comprise a full, true and correct transcript taken in the matter of the United States of America versus Prem Kumar Rampeesa, 19-cr-20026-4 on Wednesday, May 22, 2019.

/s/Marilyn J. Jones
Marilyn J. Jones, CSR 0935, RPR
Federal Official Reporter
231 W. Lafayette Boulevard
Detroit, Michigan 48226

Date: June 7, 2019